THE INVENTION CLAIMED IS:

1   1.   A method of communicating with a customer,
2 comprising:
3   receiving a signal that indicates arrival of
4 a customer at a service facility;
5   in response to the received signal, accessing
6 a database to retrieve first data concerning the customer;
7 and
8   on the basis of the retrieved first data,
9 transmitting second data to the customer.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the
2 transmitting step includes transmitting the second data to a
3 computing device carried by the customer.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, wherein the signal is
2 received from the computing device carried by the customer.

1   4.   The method of claim 1, wherein the signal is
2 received from a device carried by the customer.

1   5.   The method of claim 4, wherein the device
2 carried by the customer is a computing device.

1   6.   The method of claim 1, wherein the first data
2 includes the second data.

1   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the service
2 facility is an airline terminal.

1   8.   The method of claim 7, wherein the first data
2 includes flight reservation information.

1   9.   The method of claim 7, wherein the second
2 data includes instructions for checking-in for a flight.

1   10.   The method of claim 7, wherein the second
2 data includes a notification that a flight is delayed or
3 canceled.

1   11.   The method of claim 10, wherein the second
2 data includes information concerning a substitute flight.

1   12.   The method of claim 10, wherein the second
2 data includes information concerning a hotel reservation.

1   13.   A system for providing communication between
2 a customer and a service provider, comprising:
3   a portable computing device carried by the
4 customer; and
5   a computer operated by the service provider
6 and programmed to:
7   receive a signal that indicates that the
8 customer has arrived at a service facility;
9   in response to the received signal,
10 access a database to retrieve first data concerning the
11 customer; and

12   on the basis of the retrieved first

13   data, transmit second data to the portable computing device

14   carried by the customer.

1   14.   The system of claim 13, wherein the signal is

2   transmitted from the portable computing device carried by

3   the customer.

1   15.   The system of claim 13, wherein the portable

2   computing device is a personal digital assistant (PDA).

1   16.   The system of claim 13, wherein the first

2   data includes the second data.

1   17.   The system of claim 13, wherein the service

2   facility is an airline terminal.

1   18.   The system of claim 17, wherein the first

2   data includes flight reservation information.

1   19.   The system of claim 17, wherein the second

2   data includes instructions for checking-in for a flight.

1   20.   The system of claim 17, wherein the second

2   data includes a notification that a flight is delayed or

3   canceled.

1   21.   The system of claim 20, wherein the second

2   data includes information concerning a substitute flight.

1   22.   The system of claim 21, wherein the second

2   data includes information concerning a hotel reservation.

1   23.   A method of communicating with a customer,

2   comprising:

3   automatically detecting arrival of a customer

4   at a service facility;

5   identifying the customer;

6   retrieving information related to the

7   customer from a database; and

8   transmitting a message to the customer via a

9   computing device carried by the customer.

1   24.   The method of claim 23, wherein the computing

2   device is a personal digital assistant (PDA).

1   25.   The method of claim 23, wherein the computing

2   device is a cellular telephone.

1   26.   A method of communicating with a customer at

2   an airline terminal, comprising:

3   receiving a signal that indicates arrival of

4   the customer at the airline terminal; and

5   in response to receipt of the signal,

6   transmitting data via a wireless communication channel to a

7   portable computing device carried by the customer.

1   27.   The method of claim 26, further comprising

2   displaying the transmitted data via a display device that is

3   part of the portable computing device.

1   28.   The method of claim 26, further comprising

2 retrieving the data from a database prior to the

3 transmitting step.

1   29.   The method of claim 26, further comprising

2 identifying the customer on the basis of the received

3 signal.

1   30.   The method of claim 26, further comprising

2 determining whether the customer's flight is on time, the

3 transmitted data indicating a result of the determining

4 step.

1   31.   The method of claim 30, further comprising

2 presenting an alternative flight to the customer if it is

3 determined that the customer's flight is not on time.

1   32.   The method of claim 30, further comprising

2 booking a hotel room for the customer if it is determined

3 that the customer's flight is not on time.

1   33.   A computer program product comprising:

2   a medium readable by a computer, the computer

3 readable medium having computer program code adapted to:

4   receive a signal that indicates arrival

5 of a customer at a service facility;

6   in response to the received signal,

7 access a database to retrieve first data concerning the

8 customer; and

9   on the basis of the retrieved first

10   data, transmit second data to the customer.

1   34.   A computer program product comprising:

2   a medium readable by a computer, the computer

3   readable medium having computer program code adapted to:

4   automatically detect arrival of a

5   customer at a service facility;

6   identify the customer;

7   retrieve information related to the

8   customer from a database; and

9   transmit a message to the customer via a

10   computing device carried by the customer.

1   35.   A computer program product comprising:

2   a medium readable by a computer, the computer

3   readable medium having computer program code adapted to:

4   receive a signal that indicates arrival

5   of a customer at an airline terminal; and

6   in response to receipt of the signal,

7   transmit data via a wireless communication channel to a

8   portable computing device carried by the customer.